
Issues and Ethics

in the Helping Professions
7th Edition

by Gerald Corey, Marianne Schneider Corey, & Patrick Callanan

Thomson Higher Education – Brooks/Cole

A division of

Thomson Learning, Inc.

Definitions: Key Terms

- Law
 - defines the minimum standards society will tolerate and is enforced by government
 - Ethics
 - represents the ideal standards set and is enforced by professional associations
 - Aspirational Ethics
 - refer to the highest professional standards of conduct to which counselors can aspire
 - Principle Ethics
 - focuses on moral issues with the goal of solving a particular dilemma
 - Virtue Ethics
 - focuses on character traits of the counselor and non-obligatory ideals
-

Basic Moral Principles to Guide Decision Making

- Autonomy
 - Beneficence
 - Nonmaleficence
 - Justice
 - Fidelity
 - Veracity
-

Steps in Making Ethical Decisions

- The authors' approach to thinking through ethical dilemmas:
 1. Identify the problem or dilemma
 2. Identify the potential issues involved
 3. Review the relevant ethics codes
 4. Know the applicable laws and regulations
 5. Obtain consultation
 6. Consider possible and probable courses of action
 7. Enumerate the consequences of various decisions
 8. Decide on what appears to be the best course of action
-

Social Constructivism Model of Ethical Decision Making

- Redefines ethical decision making process as an interactive one
 - This model involves negotiating when there is disagreement
 - If consensus is not possible, further negotiating and interactive reflection need to occur
-

The Counselor as a Person and as a Professional

- Counselors must be aware of the influence of their own personality and needs
 - Personal needs of counselors based on unresolved personal conflicts:
 - a need to tell people what to do
 - a desire to take away all pain from clients
 - a need to have all the answers and to be perfect
 - a need to be recognized and appreciated
 - a tendency to assume too much responsibility for the changes of clients
 - a fear of doing harm, however inadvertently
-

Transference

- Transference is the process whereby clients project onto their therapists past feelings or attitudes they had toward significant people in their lives
 - Transference: the “unreal” relationship in therapy
 - Counselors need to be aware of their personal reactions to a client’s transference
 - All reactions of clients to a therapist are not to be considered as transference
 - Ethical issue is dealing appropriately with transference
-

Countertransference

- Countertransference is the counselor's reaction to the client's transference response
 - Examples:
 - being overprotective with a client
 - treating clients in benign ways
 - rejecting a client
 - needing constant reinforcement and approval
 - seeing yourself in your clients
 - developing sexual or romantic feelings for a client
 - giving advice compulsively
 - desiring a social relationship with clients
-

Stress in the Counseling Profession

- Counseling can be a hazardous profession
 - Some sources of stress for counselors are:
 - Feeling they are not helping their clients
 - The tendency to accept full responsibility for clients' progress
 - Feeling a pressure to quickly solve the problems of clients
 - Having extremely high personal goals and perfectionistic strivings
-

Counselor Impairment

- Impaired counselors have lost the ability to resolve stressful events and are not able to function professionally
 - Shared characteristics of impaired counselors:
 - fragile self-esteem
 - difficulty establishing intimacy in one's personal life
 - professional isolation
 - a need to rescue clients
 - a need for reassurance about one's attractiveness
 - substance abuse
-

Maintaining Vitality as a Counselor

- Counselors are often not prepared to maintain their vitality
 - Sustaining the personal self is an ethical obligation
 - Personal vitality is a prerequisite to functioning in a professional role
 - Main challenge is to create a balanced life in these areas:
 - Spirituality
 - Work and leisure
 - Love
 - Self-direction
 - Friendship
-

Values and the Helping Relationship

- Value conflicts:
 - To refer or not to refer
 - Referrals appropriate when:
 - therapist's boundaries of competence have been reached
 - therapist has extreme discomfort with a client's values
 - therapist is unable to maintain objectivity
 - therapist has grave concerns about imposing his or her values on the client
-

Values

- Development of value systems are influenced by:
 - Family
 - Peer group
 - Culture
 - Media
 - Religion
 - Education
 - Politics
-

Value Areas

- Education/New Knowledge
 - Money/Possessions
 - Religion/Morals
 - Helping Others
 - Friendships
 - Work/Career
 - Health—Emotional and Physical
 - Love/Affection
 - Achievement/Recognition
 - Marriage/Family
 - Security
 - Leisure
-

Role of Spiritual and Religious Values in Counseling

- Spirituality refers to:
 - general sensitivity to moral, ethical, humanitarian, and existential issues without reference to any particular religious doctrine
 - Religion refers to:
 - the way people express their devotion to a deity or an ultimate reality
 - Key issues:
 - Can the counselor understand the religious beliefs of the client?
 - Can the counselor work within the framework of the client?
-

Policy on End-of-Life Decisions

- Various continuing care or treatment options exist,
such as:
 - aggressive treatment of the medical condition(s)
 - life-sustaining treatment
 - medical intervention intended to alleviate suffering (but not to cure)
 - withdrawing life-sustaining treatment
 - voluntary active euthanasia
 - physician-assisted suicide
-

Values Pertaining to Sexuality

- Counselors need to know their attitude toward:
 - the belief that sex should be reserved for marriage only
 - sex as an expression of love and commitment
 - casual sex
 - group sex
 - extramarital sex
 - premarital sex
 - homosexuality
 - teenage sex
-